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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000526

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, INR/NESA, IO, NEA, DRL
NSC FOR E. MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03-25-14

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [CE](#) [CU](#) [CH](#) [CHR](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: CHR: Mission provides GSL with draft Cuba
resolution and revised China draft

Refs: (A) WHA/CCA - Colombo 03/24/04 class e-mail
- (B) State 65652
- (C) Colombo 512
- (D) Colombo 438
- (E) Colombo 402 (All Notal)

(U) Classified by James F. Entwistle, Deputy Chief of
Mission. Reasons 1.5 (b, d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a March 25 meeting at the Sri Lankan MFA, Polchief reviewed talking points and provided a copy of the draft CHR resolution on Cuba. MFA contact was non-committal, noting that the GSL was in a state of flux due to the April 2 elections. Overall, we think moving the GSL to a "yes" on Cuba is possible, but will be a tough sell. In Para 7, we attach some brief bio-data on the GSL's Permrep in Geneva and its Ambassador to Cuba. END SUMMARY.

2 (SBU) Polchief met March 25 with Ranjith Uyangoda, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General for the UN, Human Rights, and Multilateral Division. Per Ref B, Polchief reviewed talking points underscoring Cuba's truly atrocious human rights record and provided Uyangoda a copy of the Honduran draft resolution on Cuba. He also provided Uyangoda a copy of the revised resolution on China.

3 (C) Regarding the Cuba draft, Uyangoda commented that the GSL would study it closely. As noted by Foreign Minister Fernando and Foreign Secretary Goonetilleke in recent meetings (see Refs C-D), Uyangoda remarked that his government had not yet formulated its response regarding either the Cuba or China resolutions. Uyangoda added that things were in flux due to the April 2 parliamentary elections and he was not sure when MFA principals would be able to focus on CHR issues, much less what changes a possible new government might bring.

4. (C) Unprompted, Uyangoda noted that Cuba had been doing a good bit of lobbying with the GSL on this matter. He confirmed that Cuban Deputy FM Manuel Aguilera de la Paz had raised the issue of the draft resolution with FM Tyrone Fernando during his recent visit to Colombo. FM Fernando had also met with the Cuban foreign minister at the latter's request during his mid-March visit to Geneva for the UNHRC.

5. (C) COMMENT: Overall, we think moving the GSL to a "yes" on Cuba is possible, and Mission will continue to work with the GSL both in the pre- and post-election periods. In the meantime, we urge Geneva to continue to be in touch with Permrep Fernando and Havana to continue to be in touch with Ambassador Wijesekara (see bio-data below). These two envoys are well-connected in Colombo and could play an important role in persuading the GSL how to vote.

6. (C) COMMENT (Continued): Getting to "yes" will be a tough sell, however. If the UNP government wins, it will probably be reluctant to stick its neck out on this, even though it is relatively pro-U.S. If the UPFA wins, there is probably a zero chance of a switch to a "yes" vote, as President Kumaratunga and Lakshman Kadirgamar, her chief foreign policy assistant, are basically addicted to "NAM"-type views. Moreover, one of the key players in the UPFA is the radical Marxist JVP, which in its rhetoric sometimes makes fond references to Castro. END COMMENT.

7. (C) Brief bio-data on Sri Lanka's Permrep in Geneva and Ambassador to Cuba follows:

-- Permrep Sarala Fernando: Fernando just arrived in Geneva. She had served in Colombo previously as the MFA's Additional Secretary for SAARC, South Asia, and Multilateral Affairs. A career officer, she has also served as ambassador to Sweden and Thailand in past assignments. Fernando is friendly to Americans and is approximately 55.

-- Ambassador Piyasiri Wijesekara: Wijesekara is a political appointee. He is well-connected in Colombo circles: his brother is Mahinda Wijesekara, the minister of fisheries (who is widely reputed to be quite corrupt). Before Havana, Wijesekara also served as DCM at Sri Lanka's embassy in France. He is in his fifties.

18. (U) Minimize considered.

LUNSTEAD